

EDINA PARK BOARD
7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JUNE 12, 2001

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom White, Floyd Grabel, Dave Fredlund, Karla Sitek, Andy Finsness, Mike Damman, Ardis Wexler, Linda Presthus

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Klus, John Murrin

STAFF PRESENT: John Keprios, Ed MacHolda, Janet Canton

OTHERS PRESENT: Betsy Robinson, Lane Barton, Linda Masica

The Park Board went on a tour to the following locations:

Edina Aquatic Center
Rosland Park Pathway (near Art Center)
Lewis Park (bandy rink and soccer fields)
Braemar Park (Courtney Ball Fields Complex & Gun Range Site)
Edina High School (soccer fields)

Meeting began at 8:30 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MAY 8, 2001 PARK BOARD MINUTES

Floyd Grabel MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 8, 2001 PARK BOARD MINUTES.
Ardis Wexler SECONDED THE MOTION. MINUTES APPROVED.

II. WELCOME COUNCIL MEMBER GUEST, LINDA MASICA

Mr. White welcomed City Council member Linda Masica. Ms. Masica indicated that she would like to see more interaction between the City Council and the Park Board and noted that the Park Board has a lot of importance and influence in the community. Ms. Masica pointed out that in regards to the Police and Fire training facility that is listed on the agenda the City Council is quite divided on where it currently stands. Therefore, the Park Board may want to give some input on this as quickly as possible. Ms. Masica stated that for her own personal information she would like to know what the Park Board's thoughts are regarding this issue. Mr. Finsness asked if the Park Board's recommendation was read at the City Council meeting to which it was noted no. Mr. Keprios indicated that the recommendation was appeared in the Park Board minutes and in a Staff Report to the City Council.

Mr. White commented that he would also like to see more interaction between the Park Board and City Council but isn't quite sure how to go about it. He suggested that the Park Board members could take turns attending the City Council meetings. That way we could answer any questions the City Council may have and report back to the Park Board on what is happening. Mr. White added that Mr. Keprios does give us good reports but it might be nice to also have a Park Board member present. Ms. Presthus pointed out that the Park Board doesn't have a whole lot of input at the City Council meetings and that basically the members would just be reporting back. Mr. White noted that if a question were asked and a Park Board member were present they could explain the Park Board's view on the particular issue.

Ms. Masica pointed out that at the next City Council meeting the Police/Fire Training Facility is going to be discussed and therefore a Park Board member may want to be present to explain their reasoning for asking for that parcel of land. Mr. White responded that he does plan to attend the City Council meeting as well as write a letter explaining it so that there will be something formal in the records. Mr. White asked if there should be a motion indicating that a Park Board member attend the City Council meetings or should it be left informal. Mr. Keprios commented that he attends most of the City Council meetings, especially the ones that have Park Board issues. He indicated that he feels it would be very appropriate if the Park Board is bringing something forward to the City Council that a Park Board member does attend the meeting to speak on behalf of the action. Otherwise, Council agendas are mostly filled with a lot of non-Park Board related issues and therefore there really is not a need to have a Park Board member present at every City Council meeting.

Ms. Presthus asked Mr. Keprios if he receives an agenda before the City Council meetings to which he replied yes. She noted that the Park Board would then know ahead of time whether a Park Board member would need to attend or not. Mr. Keprios pointed out that typically the actions start with the Park Board. Mr. Keprios also pointed out that he typically doesn't put anything in front of the City Council unless the Park Board minutes have already been approved so that the minutes are an accurate account of what happened.

Mr. White asked Mr. Keprios to send him the City Council's agenda so that he can determine whether or not a Park Board member should attend. It was noted that Mr. Keprios would e-mail the city council agendas to Mr. White.

III. Police & Fire Training Facility at Braemar Park - Tom White, Chairman

Mr. Keprios indicated that this has been a very difficult issue for the City Council. He noted that at the last City Council meeting both the Police Chief and Fire Chief gave wonderful presentations on why they see the need to be valid and why that space would benefit Edina.

Mr. Keprios stated that at the City Council meeting Ron Erhardt asked why the Park Board is changing their mind so late in the game. Mr. Keprios indicated that in defense of the Park Board he replied that the issue was never brought before the Park Board to begin with. He noted that this is the first time the Park Board has ever discussed the issue. Mr. White pointed out that for the last 3 or 4 years he has been asking about the gun range site and was always told they are looking at a possible training facility. However, between the time this was put on the agenda and now somehow the financing has now come through and it's a done deal. He indicated that he understands this is just coincidental timing. He commented that the Park Board has wanted to address this issue but it has always been sort of nebulous that nothing is happening. They were told there is nothing in concrete and if something does happen it might be brought before the Park Board. Mr. Keprios pointed out that he was directed not to bring it before the Park Board.

Mr. White indicated to the Park Board that he feels it might be appropriate to write the City Council a letter, which he would be happy to do, that would outline the resolution and why the Park Board feels the way we do. Mr. White commented that he just wants to make sure it gets back on the agenda because it is a very important issue. He noted that it is the last undeveloped space in Edina and if we want to develop any sort of public facility in Edina for our park use, we are going to have to buy houses and tear them down because we don't have any other space in Edina. He pointed out that there is some space over on York Avenue by the YMCA; however, it is right next to a large tower with retired people, which would bring some community issues. Mr. Finsness noted that he thinks we made a pretty clear point in that the training facility could easily be put somewhere else. Mr. White pointed out that the City of Edina would probably get more than fair value for the use of the spot; however, because there is no other property available and it's worth more than they will ever get. He commented that maybe that point should also be put in the letter that perhaps financially it makes sense, however, it doesn't make financial sense if you sell your last piece of property and you've got nothing left.

Ms. Presthus asked if Edina is getting a lot of money for the use of that property to which Mr. Keprios replied no. Mr. White indicated that it's his understanding that each city that is participating in this project is making a contribution of some sort and because Edina is donating the land they do not have to make a cash contribution. He stated that they are characterizing that land as being worth a million dollars. Mr. White explained that another issue is the police have to go outside of the city to train which involves overtime. Therefore, by having the training facility at Braemar there is a significant employment savings. Also, if the training facility were put in a different city, Edina would have to come up with a million dollar contribution of cash of its own that it doesn't have. Also, there is currently a \$500,000 grant on the table that comes from the state.

Floyd Grabiell MOVED THAT THE CHAIRMAN WRITE SUCH A LETTER TO THE CITY COUNCIL REITERATING THE RESOLUTION AND THE REASONS FOR THE PARK BOARD'S OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL AND IF POSSIBLE

THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PARK BOARD BE PRESENT AT THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS.

Mr. White commented that he would be happy to go to the meeting.

Ardis Wexler SECONDED THE MOTION.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PARK IMPROVEMENT NEEDS - JOHN KEPRIOS

Mr. Keprios indicated to the Park Board that from his first draft of a capital improvement plan for 2001 if funding is available he has approximately \$650,000 worth of improvements listed. He noted that he pretty much followed what the Blue Ribbon Committee suggested. He would like to first address the ADA compliant access needs for the playground equipment. Also, there are immediate needs with the Rosland Park pathway along the lake.

Mr. Keprios explained that with the new Senior Center they have identified \$400,000 worth of furnishing needs and noted that he asked Susan Weigle to address their most immediate needs and try to scale it back. He stated that he is meeting with Ms. Weigle tomorrow and will suggest that the Senior Citizen's Advisory Committee make a contribution from their budget to help purchase some furnishings.

Mr. Keprios commented that it would not be cost effective to routinely paint the Arneson Acres Park building but instead put on steel siding as well as replace the worn and inefficient windows that are currently in place.

Mr. Keprios pointed out that the big-ticket item is the \$313,000 that it will cost to convert the bandy field into a playable soccer, rugby, football and lacrosse field. He noted that's the immediate need for general park improvements. Because that field has lighting, it is like gaining two fields without outdoor athletic field lighting.

Ms. Wexler asked about the fire suppression system at Braemar Arena that is scheduled for 2002 and questioned if that is a safety issue that should be addressed sooner. Mr. Keprios explained that issue has been debated not long after the arena was built in the mid-60s and noted that he thinks it can wait another year. He commented that he doesn't think it's so much of a health safety issue for facility users as it is save the building's roof issue. He indicated that the system is not designed to save lives but rather to save the roof.

Mr. Keprios stated that there clearly are some things that he just doesn't see as having the money in a capital plan to address for quite awhile and unfortunately a lot of those are field needs, which can be very expensive. He explained that he delayed doing any field work in 2002 mainly because the parking lot by the pool is about a \$400,000 maintenance item, which doesn't build us anything new but it stays on track of fixing what we

currently have. He indicated that many of the maintenance items such as replacing parking lots, roofs, windows, siding, pathways, etc. could be funded through the capital plan, however, some of the larger maintenance items may have to rely on a future referendum.

Ms. Presthus asked if what was promised to Sherwood Park was listed to which Mr. Keprios replied yes. However, he noted that it doesn't have to be done this year but next year they will look at having something done. Mr. Keprios indicated that he plans to meet with the neighborhood to ask them for their input on park design and facility issues.

Mr. Keprios stated that George Klus asked him to share his comment that is the Park Board should strongly consider chasing more corporate dollars. Mr. Keprios explained that his answer to him was it's hard to justify going after something new when we can't take care of what we've got. However, he indicated that he currently has staff trying to get some corporate money for a showmobile, whether it be from the Lions Club or Rotary Club or another source. He explained that with the showmobile they could advertise and show who donated towards it.

Mr. Keprios indicated that he would hope staff would not have to spend too much of their time and energy chasing after money from the corporate world. He noted that we need to have an intelligent capital plan in place to keep on going now and for many years to come. Mr. Keprios pointed out that a community the size of Edina with 39 parks and the type of infrastructure we have we really need to have a \$500,000 to \$600,000 a year capital plan just to keep up. We need at least an additional \$500,000 to be able to build new additional facilities every year to meet the current demand. He noted that maybe we don't build something new every year but instead save the money to afford the larger items once every three to five years. He pointed out that we need \$500,000 to \$600,000 just to keep up with those maintenance items that are not covered under the operating budget. Mr. Keprios noted that there has not been capital funding in place for park and recreation since 1995.

Mr. White indicated that we need to approach the City Council because we need a capital plan, we haven't had one since 1995 and things are falling apart. Since the referendum did not pass, we have to sit down and figure out what we need and with these ideas we know we need \$500,000 a year or more just to keep up. Mr. White then asked what is our strategy. Mr. Keprios replied that, if the Park Board likes staff's proposed capital improvement plan and are prepared to approve it that would be fine. Otherwise, he would suspect what might happen is the City Council might want to take a look at this first and maybe revert it back to the Park Board with their comments to have you rethink some things because they might give you a little different direction.

Mr. Keprios explained that currently the City Council is receiving a business plan for the enterprise facilities. Staff is attempting to educate the City Council on how the enterprise facilities function and what the business strategy is for each one. The City Council will then be able to make some very well informed and intelligent decisions on what the future funding is going to be for our parks. He added that these are not an easy decisions

because there are no simple solutions. Mr. Keprios noted that one decision affects another and you might want to take some time and look through it and send back any feedback. The issue will be put on the August Park Board agenda.

Mr. White asked if it is accurate that the number one thing that needs to get done is the ADA compliance path. Mr. Keprios responded that they have lived without them since 1996 and he has not received any complaints, however, the Blue Ribbon Committee and a few others have identified this as the highest priority item on the list in their view.

Ms. Presthus asked Mr. Keprios if he has been getting any pressure on Van Valkenburg Park because that is listed so far out in the future to which Mr. Keprios replied he has been getting a lot of pressure from the neighborhood for the past several years. However, he has been getting even more pressure on the skate park via petitions, phone calls, e-mails and person visits. Mr. Keprios explained that it's real hard to justify building new facilities when we don't have enough funding in place to properly take care of the existing infrastructure. He indicated that the only new item he has listed is the \$80,000 for the skate park and that's because it cannot wait until 2004 because we will lose the other communities who are currently involved, which is a loss of over \$160,000 from other sources. Mr. White asked Mr. Keprios weren't we looking to the state for some money for the skate park to which Mr. Keprios replied we worked hard in applying for state grant monies and did not get it. He noted that he has been told that if Edina cannot come up with its contribution of \$80,000 for the skate park that the other two communities cannot guarantee that they will be able to continue but instead would pursue directing their dollars to developing smaller skate parks within their own communities. Mr. Keprios stated that he was hoping to hit up some donors and he currently has that in motion.

Mr. Grabiell commented that the reason Edina is a nice place to live is because the city is well managed, it has a lot of good churches, it has a lot of good schools and it has a lot of good amenities, which among them are the parks. He noted that it's important to him that Edina is a nice place to live because some time in the next 15 years he wants to sell his house for a lot of money. He stated that everyone who lives in Edina has a vested personal interest in making sure that this is a great place to live. One of the things that makes Edina an attractive place to be is making sure that the parks in the city are first class places. Therefore, he would like the City Council to be aware of what the Park Board is thinking and rather than waiting for the City Council to come and ask us what our opinion is maybe we can just say this is what our opinion is and this is why we think we should take a stand. Mr. Grabiell indicated that it would be great to have the police and fire training in Edina but that will not make Edina a more attractive place to buy a house. Having a nice developed park in that corner of the city makes Edina a more attractive place to buy a house.

Tom White MOVED THAT HE WOULD LIKE THE PARK BOARD TO DEVELOP A FIVE YEAR PLAN AND JOHN KEPRIOS WILL TAKE INPUT FROM BOARD MEMBERS BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT PARK BOARD MEETING TO CONSIDER A MOTION.

Floyd Grabel SECONDED THE MOTION.

Ms. Presthus indicated that one item that is grossly missing that was a big part of the referendum was indoor gymnasiums. There is nothing about indoor gymnasiums in the plan. Mr. Keprios stated that would be a very good discussion for the Park Board to have. Mr. White noted that he also thinks indoor gymnasiums should be in the plan. Mr. Keprios commented that they are currently not in there because of his own bias, however, gyms can certainly be added. He explained that his recommendation is gymnasiums do not belong in parks, they belong next to schools. Ms. Presthus stated that we do not have enough gymnasiums to field our associations so we need to look at this and put it somewhere in the future plan. She noted that the associations have come to us asking for our help and it will not do any justice to disregard them now. Mr. Keprios pointed out that the failed referendum forces kids to have to play on Fridays and weekends. Ms. Presthus expressed that might be a plan but if we are going to have fencing and a showmobile in the future she feels very strongly there should be gymnasiums in the future.

Mr. White commented that he thinks over the next couple of weeks everyone should call Mr. Keprios with items they would like to see in the five-year plan and he can include them all. He stated that we include everything in there and at the next meeting we will talk about it and give some priority to each item as a group.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

V. OTHER

A. Gymnasium Fee - Mr. Keprios indicated that at the Asset Building Connecting Withy Kids meeting he attended today he was informed that at the next School Board meeting they are going to vote as to whether or not they will start charging for gymnasium use. It noted that they are looking at approximately \$10.00 an hour, which could be effective as early as July 1, 2001. Mr. White asked how that is going to affect our athletic associations to which Mr. Keprios replied they are obviously going to have to collect more money for their programs than has been advertised.

Ms. Presthus asked Mr. Keprios to explain their rationale for this to which Mr. Keprios indicated that he does not know yet, it is just what he was recently told. Mr. Keprios indicated that he has asked Mr. MacHolda and Ms. Tilsner to contact the associations that will be affected by this and let them know. It appears to be a School Board budget issue.

Mr. Keprios stated that the City does not charge the schools for everything they use of the city's facilities and it is not his intent to propose that we start charging them for everything now. He noted that the schools are not proposing to charge us for any field use at this time. Mr. Keprios explained that he is currently collecting data on all of the city facilities the school uses and there is approximately \$30,000 worth of stuff

that we don't charge them for. As soon as he has all of the information compiled together he will send it to the Park Board members.

B. Braemar Park Land - Betsy Robinson, Edina resident, asked if the new medical center that is going to be built on Interstate 494 part of the Park Department's property to which Mr. Keprios replied no. Ms. Robinson asked if they paid a fee to the Developer's Fund to which Mr. Keprios replied yes there would be money put into the Developer's Fund, which goes to the City of Edina. He indicated that the money will go into the Developer's Fund that is specifically for park purposes. Ms. Robinson asked if the money would have any effect on the budget to which Mr. Keprios replied the money cannot be used for the operating budget but can be used for capital improvements. Ms. Robinson asked if there are any plans of using that money. Mr. Keprios replied the fund is currently not large enough to plan for any significant improvements now but that they will set it aside until grows to a point where they can plan something.

Ms. Robinson asked in regards to the proposed police/fire training facility if it is voted on by the City Council and for some reason the coalition doesn't come together what happens to the property. Does it become available for other uses? Mr. Keprios replied it would still remain City of Edina property. Mr. Finsness asked Mr. Keprios if there is language somewhere that states what a park is and what it can and cannot be used for. Mr. Keprios explained that there is a written policy, not an ordinance that recommends highly that no parkland will ever be sold. Ms. Robinson asked if a strong recommendation could be made that if the coalition folds that this piece of property revert back to its original usage. Ms. Presthus indicated that is what it states now, that if it doesn't go through it reverts back to parkland. Mr. White pointed out that the pole barn on the park property is not a park and recreation pole barn. It's park property that is being used for another part of the city. Mr. White again pointed out that the Park Board does not make policy; we are just an advisory group.

Mr. Keprios indicated that his guess would be that if the police/fire training facility were voted out that it would revert to its current use, which is a recycling area for fill and street sweepings. This is also a very serious issue that affects all of Edina. There is no other place for them to go and it would be a very large expense to move that operation outside of the city.

- C. Miscellaneous - Mr. Keprios indicated they had a great parade of boats event at Centennial Lakes this past weekend. Also, the Park and Recreation Department has tripled the number of staff in the last three weeks, which are all part-time summer staff, and they are in full swing.

Ms. Presthus asked if the Park Board needs to do anything for the 4th of July Parade to which Mr. Keprios replied no. He indicated that the parade gets bigger and better every year. Mr. Keprios pointed out that for the fireworks this year they are renting a sound system so it should be easier for people to hear and they are also going to have a P-51 World War II airplane fly by before the band starts and a helicopter fly by at

the start of the parade. He noted that this year they have a wonderful fireworks display planned and they are spending approximately \$12,000 on it. Ms. Presthus asked if vendors are allowed to which Mr. Keprios replied that he gives exclusive rights to the Lion's Club because they donate the money back to the parks.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Floyd Grabiell MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:35 P.M. Karla Sitek SECONDED THE MOTION. MEETING ADJOURNED.